Dear Friends,

Greetings from the desk of the Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research.

Word comes from friends in Iran of foreboding, a general sense of fear that the United States might bomb the country at any time.


The World Divided by a Line is a Dead Body Cut in Two: The Twenty-Second Newsletter (2019).
Iran sits at the precipice of a Gulf War, which does not seem to have ended. Today, the Gulf War manifests itself in the fierce siege against Iran. US President Donald Trump's harsh sanctions and his threats of war recall shooting through the region. Rulers of Lebanon all have decided to wait and see how the situation will unfold. The key player here is China. How China will decide the next stage, as it wrote to its Middle East partners, ‘is the key to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict’. 

Arabia and Israel to do the same now? Our generation was gassed by the US-backed Saddam Hussein. Is it now Omid’s generation turn to break down under the harsh sanctions and the shadow of American bombers? Hamid worries for his son, Omid, now age 19. ‘If they start a new war….’, he says, and then stops, his eyes down, coughing... no compunction in providing Iraq with chemical weapons to use against Iran in the 1980s, why would they not allow Saudi Arabia to use them now? Iran has become preoccupied with death due to the sanctions and the rhetoric of war. Shortages of medicines have already killed people. ‘Iranians’, it is said, ‘have become like calculators’. Life is filled with numbers. Following the exchange rate of the dollar, paying the rent, saving for home settlement. The structure of social life is suspended. Hamid checks the dollar’s price each day. Far from his village, Donald Trump mimes Saddam’s move to attack Iran. Iran’s currency collapsed by 70%, causing high inflation. The cost of basic needs went up. Workers’ purchasing power dropped by 53%. A kilogramme of meat costs more than the entire day’s wage of a worker. Sanctions have reduced the official concedence of trade, opening up space for informal market networks and informal forms of smuggling. The small informal currency has become the prevailing price of goods and services outside of Iran. Iran’s economy is increasingly being bent into shape, which is a key factor in the rising price of goods and services in Iran. Sanctions increased, so did the informal economy. One study suggests that the smuggling has increased by thirty-seven times its pre-sanctions frequency. Sanctions have increased, so has the informal economy, so has the smuggling. Workers get paid in ‘dinar’; often with months of delay in payment. Real work, random encounters in foreign cities to demand their salaries. Helped reduce women workers to take out loans to meet their basic needs. Low informal currency is a good business environment for speculators, with drug and hard medicine, with grey market trade. Foreigners are good business partners for producers, with drugs and hard medicine, with grey market trade. Foreign investments collapsed, and capital fled the country. A source says that since the summer of 2017, about US $20 billion has left Iran. Companies have also fled, making more that parties for machinery and cars needed in its early natural. Production of vehicles fell from 500,000 to 20,000. Unemployment has increased. Workers have fewer child allowances that they cannot get paid because ‘Iran is a war economy’. The informal sector has grown, with privileges jobs and informal employment increasing beyond the norm. Hamid has been in the informal sector for decades. He rarely got paid on time. ‘Not paying got paid on time is normal...’ often with months of delay in payment. Real work, random encounters in foreign cities to demand their salaries. Helped reduce women workers to take out loans to meet their basic needs. Low informal currency is a good business environment for speculators, with drug and hard medicine, with grey market trade. 

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